

The harsh restrictions, and cutting off contacts with moderate Palestinians, will severely complicate our ability to assume an active role in helping both sides resolve the conflict.

If we cannot engage with moderates, and those trying to develop the Palestinian economy and build civil society, we forfeit our ability to nurture and strengthen the positive elements in Palestine.

We need a bill that allows us the utmost flexibility to help moderate Palestinians, to quickly get economic and humanitarian aid to places that need it, like hospitals and health clinics, and helps prevent the resumption of terrorism. This bill does not meet these criteria.

We need to isolate and weaken Hamas, and hopefully their tenure at the head of the PA will be a short one. But if we cannot distinguish between Hamas and the majority of the Palestinian people, we cannot possibly expect to have a role in creating what comes next.

Israelis and Palestinians realize that in the end, their fates are tied. When Palestinians' lives get worse, so do those of Israelis.

It's time to help the majorities on both sides reach their mutual goal—a peaceful two-state solution—rather than standing in the way by punishing one side.

Give our State Department an opportunity to nurture peace, or we will surely have to ask our military to counter more terrorism. Vote against H.R. 4681.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4681 Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

As an original cosponsor, I fully support this bill and would like to thank my friend from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and my Ranking Member TOM LANTOS for introducing this important bipartisan legislation.

This bill sends a clear message to Hamas that the United States will never support a terrorist organization cloaked as a democratically elected party.

The support Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by the United States, received shows many Palestinian people do not want peace with Israel and will continue to support terrorist operations on innocent civilians.

Hamas officials continue to endorse recent suicide bombing and continued violence against Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East.

As long as Hamas chooses to continue down the path of terrorism, it will meet with financial and diplomatic isolation from the United States and our allies.

I have read the statements of several groups opposed to this legislation because this will create a road block towards negotiations. What I want to know is how do you negotiate with a government who is hell bent on your destruction.

Would any member of this House negotiate with al Qaeda? I would hope not. Hamas must be isolated, not coddled, and that is what this legislation will do.

Hamas would rather cling to the impossible dream of the destruction of Israel than work towards a two-state solution that will bring prosperity and an end to the bloodshed that has tainted this region for so many years.

This bill rightly ends direct aid to the Hamas-controlled government. Hamas refuses to change so they must be treated like the terrorists they are.

But I want to make clear that the goal of this legislation is not to cause a humanitarian catastrophe but to isolate this terrorist led government, this legislation will allow funding for the basic health needs of the Palestinian people.

I'm sure like me, my colleagues would rather be supporting a Palestinian Authority-led government working towards a peaceful two-state solution but instead we face the realities of a Hamas-led government bent on the destruction of Israel.

Until this Hamas-led government recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State, renounces violence, dismantles its terrorist infrastructure, and halts all anti-Israel incitement the United States should never provide assistance to the Palestinian-led government of Hamas.

VETERANS' HOUSING OPPOR- TUNITY AND BENEFITS IM- PROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005.

This legislation will improve the benefits provided to our veterans and their families.

During war and equally importantly, after our soldiers come home and take off the uniform, we as a nation must support them fully. The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005 contains many provisions that will help us achieve this goal.

I would like to point out one particular provision that is similar to a bill, H.R. 821, which I have introduced.

Like H.R. 821, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act will amend title 38 to extend the requirement for reports from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the disposition of cases recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief due to administrative error. Extending this reporting requirement will assist the VA in its efforts to properly care for our veterans and their families.

Administrative error should not prevent a veteran or their loved one from receiving the benefits they have fully earned.

I would like to thank and congratulate Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS as well as the other chairmen and ranking members from our committee who have worked so hard to move this important legislation forward.

It is my hope that we will also be moving a health bill forward with the same bipartisan spirit our veterans have come to expect from our committee.

I support this legislation and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 17, 2006, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior obligation.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: Rollcall No. 148: "no" (On Agreeing to the DeFazio of Oregon Amendment to H.R. 4200).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 177 and 178. The votes I missed included a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005, and a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 177 and 178.

TRIBUTE TO TELACU FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO SERVICE, AD- VANCEMENT, AND EMPOWER- MENT IN THE LATINO COMMU- NITY

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, the people of this great Nation share a common spirit and heritage. Whether born on the soil of this land or having chosen to come here in search of a better life—one free of political, social, and economic oppression, we are a nation of pioneers. We believe in the American dream, and the promise that through our labors we can achieve educational and economic success. No barrier is too imposing, no obstacle too tall that it should stand in the way of pursuing this dream.

Two of my congressional predecessors, Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob Javits, advanced legislation in the 1960s that promoted this dream by laying the foundation for an organization called TELACU. Since its founding in 1968, TELACU has become the largest community and economic development corporation in the United States. TELACU is a pioneering institution committed to service, empowerment, advancement and the creation of self-sufficiency. Brought to life through a small investment appropriated by Congress, TELACU has grown to become an organization with nearly \$500 million in assets, creating thousands of jobs, affordable homes, loans to small business people, and most importantly, numerous educational opportunities for young people and veterans.